

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 10 June 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
10 JUNE 1968

1. South Vietnam

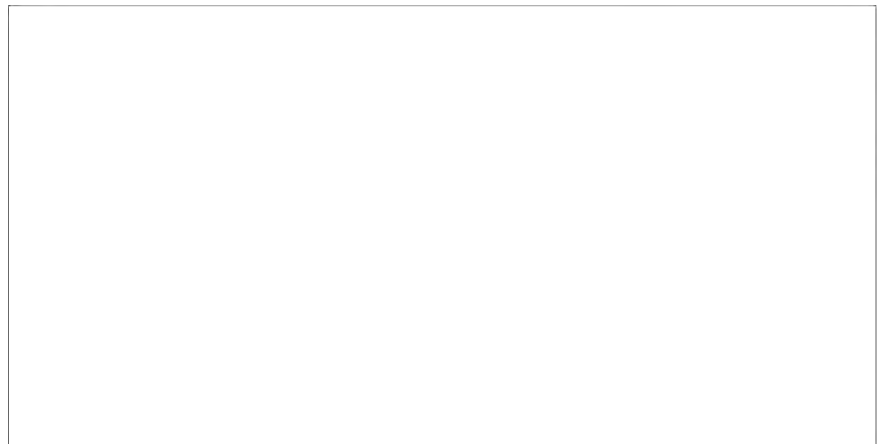
Replacement of National Police director Loan and Saigon mayor Cau has stirred little reaction so far. Both men were in Ky's camp and their removal further erodes the vice president's power base.

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2. Soviet Union



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3. Colombia

The Colombian Senate meets tomorrow to consider the unusual case of a president who has tendered his resignation. The resignation, announced by President Lleras on Friday, probably will be rejected, but Lleras may find his precipitous move is politically expensive.

The resignation was triggered by Lleras' anger at Senate opposition to his constitutional reform bill. Lleras' action, however, is widely viewed as a political ploy and, in the end, he stands a good chance of alienating important leaders of his own party. It also will weaken the coalition that governs Colombia.

4. Laos

Fighting is tapering off. Each year the Communists shift to the defensive about this time with the approach of the monsoon rains.

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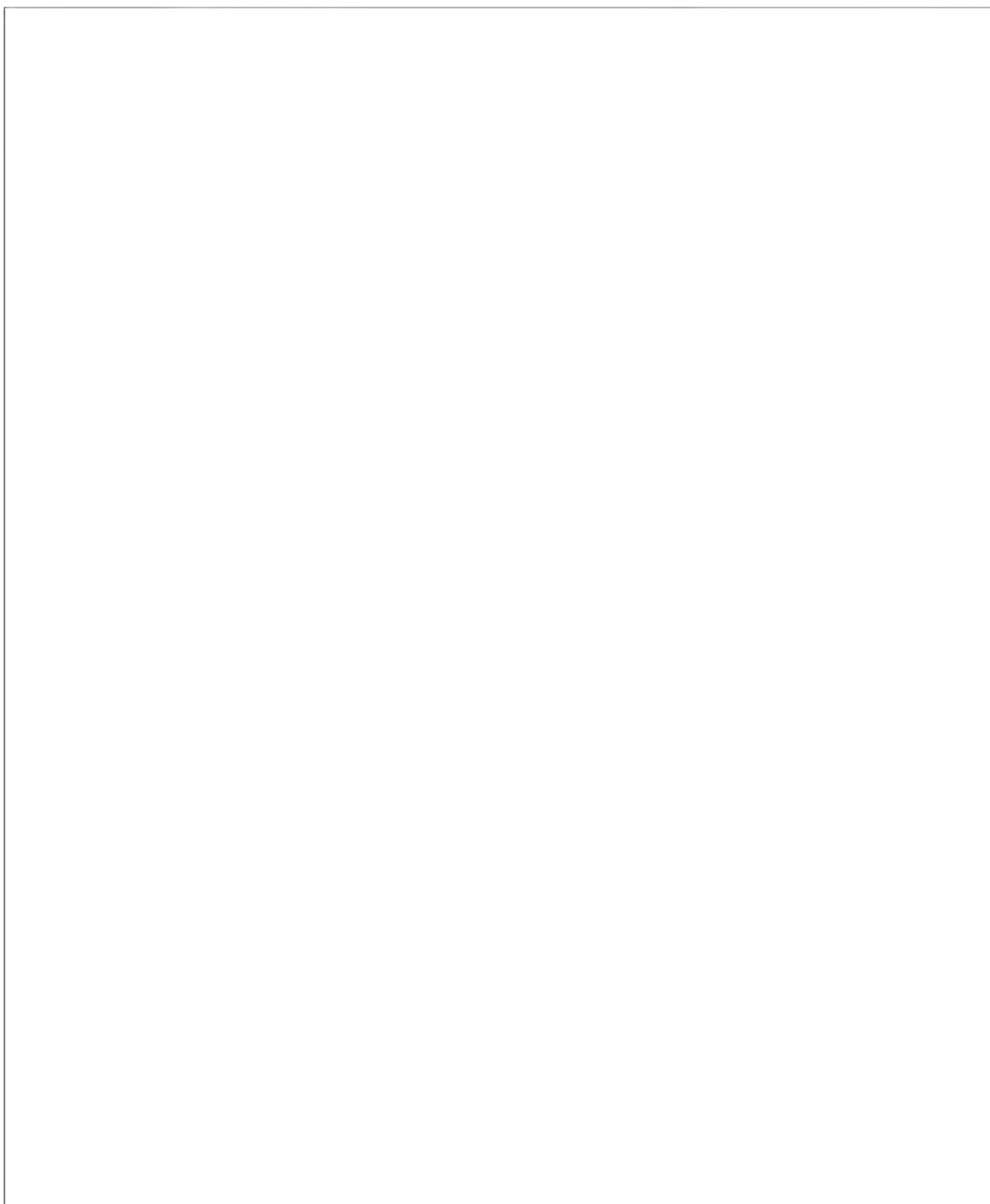
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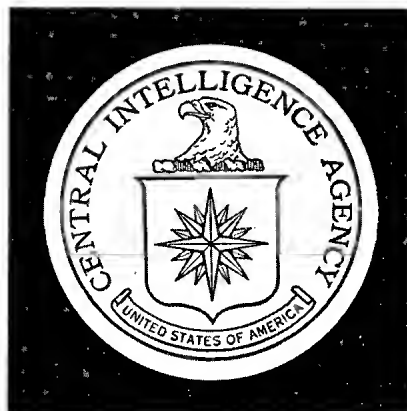


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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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10 June 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

10 June 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

North Vietnamese Ambassador in Moscow Meets US Citizens: In English language broadcasts on 7 and 8 June over its international service, Hanoi announced that Nguyen Tho Chan, the North Vietnamese ambassador in Moscow, had had separate meetings with Cyrus Eaton and a delegation of American professors and students from Windham College in Vermont. The Hanoi statements made it appear that both Eaton and the college delegation welcomed the "successes" of the Vietnamese Communists. The statements also pointed out that the ambassador had asked his visitors to convey the Vietnamese people's sincere thanks to those Americans "who are fighting persistently against the US war of aggression in Vietnam."

The meeting with the Windham group was apparently chiefly a propaganda exercise, according to information passed to the American Embassy in Moscow by the group. Chan apparently took Hanoi's standard line on the war and negotiations and stressed his government's independence of both Moscow and Peking. He claimed that US prisoners of war were "eating better" than Vietnamese and called the assassination of Robert Kennedy a political murder by hawkish elements in the US. The Vermont students were also treated to several propaganda films on North Vietnam and given literature supporting Hanoi's position on the war.

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Views on the Paris Negotiations: In separate conversations with a Western journalist, Liberation Front and Hanoi officials in Phnom Penh have given their views on the Paris talks. Both officials were adamant in insisting that the complete and unconditional cessation of the bombing was a necessary prerequisite to more substantive discussions.

The Front official, a second secretary in the Phnom Penh office, stressed the necessity of a complete American withdrawal from South Vietnam. He claimed that the Front now controls all provinces of South Vietnam, "except for the provincial centers." When pressed on this claim, however, he could not specify any area in which a peaceful Front regime, free from possible allied attack, had been established.

The press and cultural attaché of North Vietnam's embassy in Phnom Penh claimed that Hanoi had entered into the talks with the US because it considered the time to be favorable. He discounted allegations that the talks were the product of a "hawk-dove" controversy among Hanoi's leaders and denied that either Moscow or Peking had any influence on North Vietnam in its decision to begin discussions with the United States.

The North Vietnamese attaché also derided the effectiveness of US bombing but admitted that the bombing limitation had been a source of "great relief" to the people of Hanoi and said that many evacuated enterprises were now returning to the capital.

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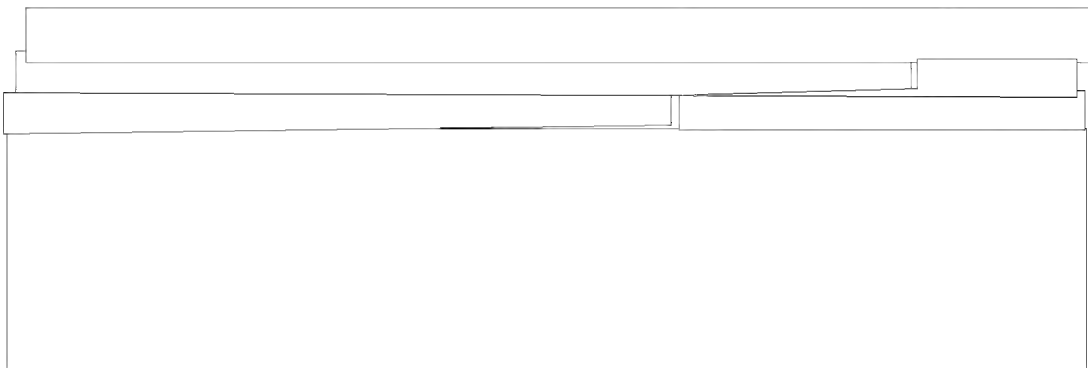
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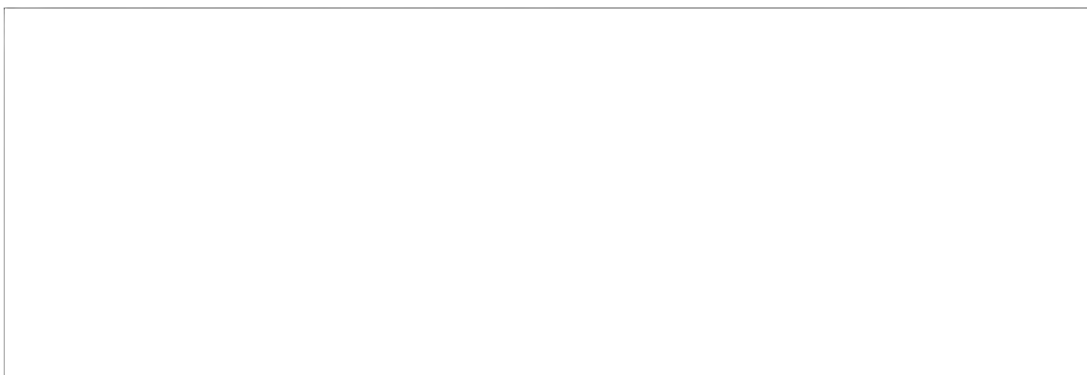


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"Victories" in Saigon: On 9 June the Viet Cong's clandestine radio, in Vietnamese to South Vietnam, broadcast a commentary on "the victories of the Saigon armed forces and people." It claimed that compatriots in many areas of the city had risen up, in coordination with "the enemy-annihilating fire of the revolutionary armed forces," and had dealt "staggering blows" to the "American devils and their lackeys." It asserted that their ability to fight on urban battlefields had increased despite the enemy's counterattacks.

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Rice Harvest Prospects: A Czech report from Hanoi is the latest indication that Hanoi's fifth-month rice crop, which is currently being harvested and normally provides about one-third of the yearly harvest, may be in some difficulty. The report, broadcast over Prague Radio in English on 8 June, noted that the harvest has begun after an unusually long and cold spring period and is generally expected to yield less rice than usual. The report also took note of the annual government appeals for greater effort in harvesting the crop, avoiding waste, and preparing the ground for the planting of the major fall crop.

There is no clear evidence as yet just how large the deficit in the spring crop will be. Hanoi's rice harvests of the past several years, however, have generally fallen below the normal annual average of 4.5 million tons. For the past two years, these deficits have been made up by large imports of rice and rice substitutes from China and the Soviet Union.

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Hanoi Restricts Travel of Foreigners: The North Vietnamese may be attempting to shield reconstruction efforts in the Hanoi area from the eyes of foreigners resident in the capital. According to a Czech broadcast of 8 June in English over the international service, the city administration in Hanoi has published a notice restricting the movements of foreigners in Hanoi and its vicinity as of 10 June. The notice states that foreigners without special permits will not be allowed to enter certain areas where important installations such as power plants, industrial complexes, and dikes are located.

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Aid to Hanoi: Le Thanh Nghi, Hanoi's traveling economic emissary, continues his aid-seeking swing through Eastern Europe. Agreements on aid for 1969 now have been signed with Hungary, Bulgaria, and Poland. The pact with Poland, signed on 8 June, in addition to covering the usual manufactured goods and equipment, states that "installations for complete plants" will be supplied. This may refer to the Polish effort to provide miscellaneous small factories, a program which has been dormant during the bombing of areas in North Vietnam where industrialization was taking place. During the past two years, large numbers of North Vietnamese have continued to undergo

technical training in Poland and other East European countries.

After his stop in Poland, Nghi traveled on to Bucharest, where agreements similar to those reached with the other East European countries will probably be signed in the next few days.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi on Senator Kennedy's Views: Statements on the situation in South Vietnam by Senator Robert Kennedy were highlighted in articles in the North Vietnamese press over the weekend in an attempt to refute US statements in support of South Vietnam and to defend the right of the whole Vietnamese people to fight the Americans in all of Vietnam.

An authoritative "Commentator" article in the party daily, broadcast on 7 June over Hanoi's international service in English, strongly derided the idea of a US commitment to the Republic of Vietnam, and went on to quote remarks by such prominent Americans as John Kennedy, Walter Lippmann, and John K. Galbraith critical of the government of South Vietnam. In addition to quoting the late President Kennedy, the article quoted the late Senator Kennedy as saying that the US presence in Vietnam had led the Americans to rely on the same group as did the French. This had caused the disastrous decline of South Vietnam over the past 13 years.

Kennedy's statement about the 13 years of South Vietnamese decline was also featured in another article in the party daily, broadcast in English on 8 June over Hanoi Radio's international service. The article

attempted to refute the concept of a South Vietnamese nation. It argued strongly that Vietnam is one country, with one history and one people. It rejected the US claim of infiltration and aggression against the South and sharply pointed out that "only maniacs could think of Vietnamese, wherever they might live, who were fighting in their own country, infiltrating or invading another country."

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